

*The Blessedness of them that die in
the LORD.*

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd on Occasion of the DEATH of

Mr. GEORGE MILL,
A Native of *North-Britain.*

W I T H

A *Preface* containing an Account of some
remarkable Circumstances of his Life,
especially towards his latter End.

By HILKIAH DAVISON.

*The Wicked is driven away in his Wickedness; but the
Righteous hath hope in his Death. Prov. xiv. 32.*

L O N D O N:

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THE PREFACE.

THE following SERMON was preached on a prescribed Text, and at a fixed Time, without having sufficient Opportunity allowed for entering even hasty Thoughts in writing, in order to its Delivery. However (such as it was, so far as could be recollected) you have it now published at the Request of them that are most nearly concerned in it, in Hopes that it may in some measure contribute (thro' the Divine Blessing) to the awakening of Secure and Careless Professors, and to the Comfort and Establishment of them that believe, who esteem their Preparation for Death to be the grand Business of Life.

AS to our deceased Friend, the Want of a longer Acquaintance and of Opportunity for making Remarks on his Conduct, as well as of making Enquiry into his Character, was the Reason why so little was said of him in the Pulpit ;

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Pulpit; but I have been since well assured that there was something extraordinary in his Case and Example. that may be worthy of Remembrance, and Useful.

HE was a Man of Probity, as well as diligent in his Business, of an obliging and beneficent Temper, which he manifested by comforting the Afflicted, and assisting his Brethren in Distress, in some remarkable Instances.

HE was steadfast in the Profession of Religion, and true to those Principles he had imbibed; Having always retained a very hearty Respect for the faithful Dispensers of God's Word, as also for those other Christians that were most eminent for Piety and Zeal within his Acquaintance; which manifestly appear'd by his Choice in Marriage, upon Motives that were chiefly founded on the Respect he bore to Religion and Virtue. But such was the Nature of his Employment, which led him into Variety of Company, that, thro' the Power of Temptation, he would sometimes be drawn into their Extreams, and it may be wished that this Sin were not become too fashionable among many professed Christians, who drink beyond due Limits, tho some by the Strength of Constitution are not so much thereby exposed as others. But notwithstanding this, it appeared that God had

had a greater Work to carry on in him; for he was still followed with Convictions, and the Thoughts of another World were not extinguish'd in him: He would sometimes bewail his Case, saying, That he would fain get up the Hill, but was driven back by the Wind of Temptation. And it has been further observed of him, that while he wanted the kind and faithful Monitor that Providence had allotted for him, and even in Places not very convenient, he seemed to make Conscience of Secret Prayer, and would not easily be diverted from it, as too many are. This Course of Life he continued for several Years, till God's appointed Time of Love and Mercy came, and the Spirit of God began to work more powerfully in him, for after many great Conflicts, and many a Season of Fasting and Prayer observed by a dear Relation on his Account, he was at last effectually convinced, and melted into Tears of Sorrow for his past Sins; and tho he continued his Employment, it was sufficiently made to appear, that he was redeemed from his vain Conversation: And here-in the Grace of God was eminently exalted: And he was brought to admire the Riches of Divine Mercy in Christ, and to feel the Drawings of his Saviour's Power and Love; nothing but his Stripes could heal the Wounds that Sin had made, nothing but his Righteousness recommended him to God. And he was
then

then prevailed upon to an universal Reformation, to the great Satisfaction and Comfort of such as were the happy Observers of it.

It pleased God, who is Sovereign in his Grace, to bring about so remarkable a Change, by such other Means as he thought fit, particularly by the Reading of that excellent Book of Mr. Flavā's called the Touchstone of Sincerity, which was of very great Use to him: He would often weep over it with a humbling Remembrance of the Prevalence of former Temptations, and a thankful Sense of his Deliverance. These Things were brought to pass in about the Compass of the last Year of his Life, when he was aged about 57, at which time he might most properly be said to begin to live.— As to his last Sickness he passed thro it in calm Submission to the Will of God, and in comfortable Hopes of approaching Rest, and he spent his parting Breath in peculiar Notes of Praise, to the Wonder of some that heard him, as a Pledg and Anticipation of the Work and Joys he was then entering upon. Thus he remains a lasting Monument of the Divine Goodness, his last Works were the best, and so were his last Joys. And his Example may serve for the Comfort and Encouragement of all that sincerely Repent, at whatever time it be; but none ought from hence to presume, tho the Grace of God

God did thus abound towards him ; for he was a very peculiar Instance, with respect to some Circumstances of his Change ; however, it may convince us of the great Advantage of a Religious Education, which after many a Day may be made a Blessing to us, and the Impressions thereof may come with Power on the Soul, and produce the most happy Effects.

I say again let none presume ; for tho he thus obtained Mercy, others may not be blessed with the same Helps, nor enjoy the same Grace and Opportunity : Death may soon cut off all our Prospects, and then what is the Hope of the Hypocrite (tho he has gained a little Wealth or Pleasure in this World) when God shall take away his Soul. 'Tis most desperate Madnes for any to continue sinning against Conviction with a Design to repent hereafter, or to indulge themselves in a Life of Sensuality, in Expectation of being made Spiritual. And 'tis the greatest Prophaneness, as well as highest Presumption, to sin that Grace may abound. The Sense of his Miscarriages cost him many a briny Tear ; but we trust he is gone to the Place where all Tears are wiped away, and where the Sighs and Groans of departed Saints are changed into everlasting Songs, even Songs of Deliverance, of Triumph, and of Praise : For the Redeemed of the Lord are made to return from
their

their former State, and they shall come to the heavenly Zion with Songs and everlasting Joy on their Heads, and they shall obtain Joy, and Gladness, and Sorrow, and Sighing shall fly away.

It becomes us then to make a right Improvement of such an Example, as well as of all the other Calls of Providence and Grace which we enjoy.

Death is a common Subject wherein all are concerned. There is no Speech nor Language where its Voice is not heard, and its Power felt. Here is no Suspicion of Heresy in the Doctrine, no room for vain Speculation, or perverse Disputings; but we are justly and kindly warned to avoid the Sins of the Age (wherein Iniquity abounds, and the Love of many waxeth cold.) to reduce our Principles unto Practice, and to work while 'tis day.

It is fit that Man that must die should be humble, that we should be mild and compassionate, kind and tenderhearted one towards another, remembering that we our selves are in the Body, and must at last submit to the common Fate of Death with all its humbling Circumstances.

By

By this we are convey'd into God's immediate Presence, with whom we must be everlastingly concerned, which should engage us to secure our Union with him, and to give Glory to the Mediator, committing our Souls into his Hands, and performing all due Honours to him, which will confirm our Interest in him; for this is the Language of the Scripture, &c. All the Ends of the World should remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the Kindreds of the Nations shall worship before him. The Meek shall eat and be satisfyed, and all they that be fat upon the Earth shall eat and worship, especially they that go down to the Dust should bow before him, seeing none can keep alive his own Soul. The Thoughts of Death should inspire us to a most divine and virtuous Temper of Mind, and to such a heavenly and useful Conversation, as will render us an Honour to Religion, a Blessing to Mankind, and our selves blessed in every Condition that we may fall into.

Death is a Sanctuary for the afflicted, they that walk in their Uprighteousness shall enter into Peace, and then it will appear that all they ~~that~~ suffered here was designed for their good: Their Removal home, tho it may be in a storm, will make way for their Advancement to the serene

rene Region; of everlasting Blessedness: So that when the Righteous perish by Death, it is some times manifest they were taken from the Evil to come, tho few may lay it to Heart; and it is always certain, that the Exchange they make is to their unspeakable Advantage.

There is a Time coming on when the Judgments of God that were unsearchable, and his Ways that were past finding out shall be explained: Tho Providence may seem to frown upon us here, and the World censure hard and treat us ill, we may fully acquiesce in this, That in the End it will be known, that verily there is a Reward for the Righteous, and verily there is a God that judgeth the Earth.



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Greece, Britain, and elsewhere throughout all Europe. The Text seems designed to afford a singular Encouragement to such as should be called to die in the Protestant Cause from that Time, and perhaps

instigated by higher Powers, Heretics and Infidels, and the Ministry by Consent and Religion (tho

they may die the common Death of Men) there fore the same Blessedness must in the main belong to them: And tho the inspired Spirit ascribes this Blessing to them, yet this Blessing doth not hinder but that all dying Saints were

And I heard a voice from Heaven, saying, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

AS the principal Subject of this Book is mysterious, so it is difficult to give a certain Account of the Design of many of the Prophecys herein contained: And tho the Doctrine of this Text be plain, yet its relation to the Context is not so easily understood. However, 'tis probable that this Part of the Chap-

ter refers to the State of the Church at the Beginning of the Reformation, when a mortal Wound was given to the Papal Interest, after which a most cruel Persecution was raised against the Reformed, and many suffered Martyrdom for the Testimony of Jesus, as might be proved by very flaming Instances out of the History of the Churches of Great-Britain, and elsewhere throughout all Europe. The Text seems designed to afford a singular Encouragement to such as should be called to die in the Protestant Cause from that Time, and perhaps intimates a higher Degree of Happiness and Glory to them than to others: yet because all true Christians are united to the same Head, and are Martyrs by Consent and Resignation (tho they may die the common Death of Men) therefore the same Blessedness must in the main belong to them: And tho the inspired Writer ascribes this Blessedness to such from henceforth, yet this doth not hinder but that all dying Saints were blessed before that Time, as they that succeed them will continue to enjoy the same Blessedness unto all Futurity. We have before us,

First, A Description of the State and Temper of God's People in their Latter End, they die in the Lord.

Secondly, An Account of their Blessedness by what ensues their Death, they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.

But before we proceed to the Doctrine, it may be useful to take Notice,

1st,

1st, With what Solemnity this Subject is introduced and attested, *as by a voice from Heaven*, and the express Dictates of the Holy Ghost, to excite our Attention, and perswade us to believe. The same Spirit inspired the Prophets and Martyrs. And, as the Comforter of the Church, has left these Words on Record to animate the People of God in their Duty and Sufferings, and to give them a proper Defence against the Fears of Death. And we may hence observe the great Importance of Death, which is thus solemnly mentioned, and which needeth such Supports; for altho the Commonness of this Event (which happens alike to all) be improved by the Wicked as an Occasion of their most fatal Presumption, in that it lessens their Apprehensions, and weakens their Preparations; yet all that are wise will attend the Voice of God, and consider the Nature of the Subject, and be thereby convinced of what unspeakable Moment it is to die well; for Death is here represented as the Gate of Eternity, and as that which brings upon Men the everlasting Consequences of their present Conduct.

2^{dly}, We may observe the great and amazing Difference which lies between good Men and bad, especially with respect to their *Latter End*; for as some die in the Lord, and rest from their Labours, others are supposed (according to the Text) not to die in that happy Relation to him, and to be deprived of Rest in the other World, and that for ever. Many live without God and without Christ in the World, being Aliens from the true Church, and Strangers from the Covenants of Promise, having no well-grounded Hope, and so they die: Some die in the Arms of their Redeemer,

others are held in the Paws of the Roaring Lyon, and feel it not till Death has made them know their dismal Case: Some open their Eyes in Glory when they die, and others lift up their Eyes in Hell: And we are assured that Tribulation and Anguish waiteth for every Soul that continues to do evil, and Glory, Honour and Peace for him that worketh that which is good, *2 Rom. ix. 10.*

3dly, We may observe, that none of the Things which belong to us here will attend us into the other World but our *Works*. Our dearest Relatives and Friends, our Wealth, or Honours, with all the delightful Enjoyments of the Life of Nature, must be left behind, because they are not strictly ours, as a sensible Heathen could say,—*Et quæ non fecimus ipsi vix ea nostra voco*, they are lent us here, and when we remove, must be surrendered back to the Great Lord of the World; but our Holiness and virtuous Actions will pass into Eternity with us according to the true Import of the Text, as we find it in the Original, *τὰ δὲ ἔργα αὐτῶν ἀκολουθεῖ μετ' αὐτῶν*, *their Works follow them*, so as to go along with them: And as other Scriptures teach us, *that Righteousness and the Fear of the Lord endureth for ever*, which must refer to the Subject in whom they remain, and whom they accompany to all Eternity: Also the Sins of the Wicked will bear them Company into Eternity, as will appear when they shall be set in Order before them at the Day of Judgment, and they shall reap the Fruits of their Doings.

But I proceed to the principal Design of the Text, which is contained in the Doctrine, *That they who die in the Lord are blessed, in that they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.*

And

And in the Prosecution of this Subject, I design,

First, To explain the Nature of dying in the Lord.

Secondly, Shew in what Sense they shall rest from their labour, and their works follow them.

Thirdly, Demonstrate their Blessedness on this Account. And,

Lastly, Make Application of the Whole.

I. As to the Nature of dying in the Lord.

(1.) This may have an immediate Respect to the Lord Jesus Christ as Mediator, for all Believers die in Union with him: And departed Saints are called the dead in Christ, and are said to sleep in Jesus, *1 Cor. xv. 18.* with *1 Thess. iv. 14.* all the living Saints are united to Christ by Faith, and the same Spirit that dwells in him dwells in them: And, when they leave this World, Death shall not dissolve the Union, but rather confirm it, because the Soul will be convey'd into his immediate Embraces, and the Body will continue in the same Relation when moldered into Dust, and will be raised out of the Grave by virtue of this Union, and shall be glorified with him as Part of his Mystical Body when he shall present them to himself as a glorious Church without Spot or Wrinkle, or any such Thing, *Eph. v. 27.* and shall present them Faultless before the Presence of his Glory with exceeding Joy, *Jude xxiv.*

(2.) This

(2.) This hath a further Respect to the Great God as Lord of the Living and the Dead.

1st, They die in the Lord, who leave this World in the Faith and Love of God whereby they have adhered to him as their chief Good : By this the Saints were characterized of old, they died in Faith, *Heb. ii. 13.* and the same may be said of all that succeed them : Every true Christian retains the Habits of Grace to the last, and if they continue to enjoy the Use of their Reason, they doubtless die in the actual Exercise of every Divine Affection, which perfects their Meetness for the approaching Blessedness.

2^{dly}, They die in the Service of the Lord, that is, they continue to attend his Work till the End of their Life : This is the Desire and Endeavour of every pious Soul, and this he esteems his Glory. As the Soldier boasts of dying in the Field of Honour for the Service of his Prince and Country ; so the Christian may rejoice when he dies in the Work of his great Master. *For blessed is the Man whom his Lord when he comes shall find so doing,* *Matt. xxiv. 46.*

3^{dly}, They die in the Lord when they die in his Favor, at the Conclusion of their Labours and Conflicts in this World. Their Life is precious to him, they are adorned by the Righteousness of his Son, and secured by his Covenant : *And precious in the Sight of the Lord is the Death of his Saints,* *Psal. cxvi. 15.* 'Tis for this he calls them to leave this World, that he may reveal the Wonders of his Love to them in a more perfect Manner : And for this the Angels guard them here, and attend their exit, that they may convey them into the immediate Presence of that Glorious Lord in whose Fa-

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your they die. And this leads me to the next General Head, which shews,

II. In what Sense *they rest from their Labours, and their Works follow them.*

This contains an Account both of their Negative and Positive Happiness.

The Papists make their good Works to be meritorious. But how can this be unless they could make God amends for the Injury they have done him by Sin, and then perform not only what is properly their Duty, but what would be beneficial to him, and that without his special Assistance. *But can a Man be profitable to God as he that is wise may be profitable to himself?* Job. xxii. 2. Nor will the Distinction between Merit of Condignity and Congruity, defend their Error; for altho a Congruity be allowed between the Work and the Reward, yet there is no Merit, and the Reward is still of Grace and not of Debt. But I proceed,

First, They rest from their Labours.

The Work of a Christian is termed Labour with respect to the Difficultys that attend it, partly by reason of the Reluctance of our Natures against things Divine and Spiritual; for our Hearts are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; and partly, by reason of the Distractions, Temptations and Snares that surround us. And in order to carry on a Life of Holiness, a Christian is obliged to attend the daily Works of Repentance, Mortification, and Circumspection: On
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this Account we are bound to be crucify'd to the World, and to crucify the Flesh with its Affections and Lusts, and to wrestle with Principalities and Powers about those high and immortal Things which they would deprive us of: And for this reason we are called to strive, and fight, and run, by Allusion to them that acted their Parts in the *Grecian* and *Roman* Games, with all that Energy of Mind and Body, and great Sollicitude, which their Fears and their high Ambition did excite them to. The ordinary Troubles of Life must be expected by the best of Christians, as well as others, besides the Sufferings and Reproaches which they are called sometimes to endure for Christ, whereby they have been made a Spectacle, and a Gazing Stock to Angels and Men, as in *Heb. x. 33*. Sometimes they are wounded in the House of their Friends; and these are the most smarting Wounds. On all which Accounts, the Work and even the Patience of a Christian may justly be termed Labour. And as this Denomination is most equal, so their most painful Endeavours appear to be highly necessary; for while the most of Men labour only for the Things of the Body, these labour for the Happiness of the Soul: The one strives for a corruptible, the other for an incorruptible Crown.

Now the first Notion of their Happiness consists in Rest, and this is begun in this World, brought to greater Perfection at Death, and finished at the Resurrection.

Rest to the labouring Man is sweet (and the harder the Labour the sweeter the Rest) especially will this be so to a Christian when he shall have finished all his Labour. There is a
natural

natural Rest after Death in the Grave, where Mens Love and their Hatred and their Envy perish ; for there the Prisoners rest together, the Wicked cease from troubling, and the Weary be at rest : Their Cares and Fears and Pains, their Labours and their Troubles as to this Life, will cease. But what is this in Comparison to that Divine and Glorious Rest which remains for the People of God ? which must not be understood as a mere Cessation from Trouble, but in a far more transcendant Meaning as becomes the Dignity, the Activity, and noble Capacity of our Souls, which centre in God as the eternal Origen and Object of this Rest ; on him will all the Powers of departed Saints terminate, and in him they possess the most perfect, suitable, satisfying, and eternal Repose. Their Rest will be without alloy or fear of Trouble.

As the Wicked are like a troubled Sea that cannot rest in this World (tho they have many Objects to divert them) so will they be in the other World in a more absolute and dismal Sense : Here they allay the Terrors of their guilty Minds by the Pleasures of the Body, and sometimes they drink Wine in Bowls to drown their Cares and Fears ; but there they must drink of the Wine of the Wrath of God without mixture of Comfort, and shall have no Rest either Night or Day, as may be seen in the Context, *ver. 10, 11.*

But the Rest which the Saints shall enjoy will be without mixture of Sorrow, and this is a most transporting Thought ! to have all our Facultys rest in God in bright and harmonious Light and Love, without excentric Motion, and free from all Disturbance either within us, or from without :

In Heaven will all be serene without a Storm, all Sunshine without a Cloud, everlasting Day without a succeeding Night; and these Things the Apostle represents as the Effects of the Righteousness of God to give Tribulation to them that trouble his People: *And to them that are afflicted rest together,* 2 Thess. i. 6, 7. *And the work of Righteousness shall be Peace, and the effect of Righteousness Quietness and Assurance for ever,* Is. xxxii. 17. But some of this will be further consider'd under the following Head.

Secondly, Their Works follow them; and this in a threefold Respect.

1. With Respect to the Remembrance of them. And this will be a Part of the Blessedness of them that die in the Lord: As there is always a Pleasure in the Remembrance of good Actions, so is it increased proportionably to the Difficulties that have attended them, and their Remembrance will be accompanied with most delightful and triumphant Reflection when after all the Difficulties and Hazards of their Work and Warfare, after all the Billows that passed over them, they shall be arrived to the Harbour of Rest; where the Storms that follow'd them to the Grave, shall be left behind for ever, and their good Works shall only follow them in the other World: And where they shall sit down with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, in the Kingdom of God. God himself will remember their good Works, as appears by the Recital that will be made of them by our Redeemer and Judge at the last Day, in *Matt. 25*. And he will then make it appear that he did not forget their Work

Work of Faith, and Labour of Love, *Heb. vi.*
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2dly, With respect to the Principle and Nature of their good Works, so far as will consist with the Condition of the Inhabitants of that World, where the Spirits of just Men are made perfect, and their Facultys exalted by the highest Dispositions for glorifying God: And the Light, and Strength, and Beauty of Sanctification, will be finished to Perfection in them. Heaven is not a Place or State of meer Indolence and Inactivity, but the Saints will eternally be employ'd in the Admiration, Love, and Worship, and Praise of Him that sits on the Throne, and the Lamb: Then will his Servants serve him, *Rev. xxii. 3.* and that in a Manner suitable to the Exaltation of their Nature, the Dignity of the Object, and the Glory of their State.

3dly, With respect to their Rewards, and these will be Great and Eternal, worthy of God to bestow, and happy for Men to receive. Then will he make it appear that He is a Rewarder of them that dilligently seek him, when he shall render even eternal Life to them, that by patient Continuance in well doing seek for Glory, Honour, and Immortality, *Rom. ii. 7.* and when their light Afflictions, which were but for a Moment, shall have wrought for them [that labour'd in his Service] a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory, *2 Col. iv. 17.* this Blessedness hath no Comparitive, it has a Weight in it will overballance the Glories of the Universe, an exceeding Weight, a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory. So that the Power and Grandeur of a Kingdom, with all its Wealth and Pleasures, and the Glories of a Dia-

dem, yield us but a faint Representation of it : And the Words in the Original, *χαθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν*, do import not only the transcendant Excellency of its Nature, but the Impossibility of obtaining adiquate Ideas of it, and of Representing it by the most lofty Strains, and beautiful Figures in Language suitable to the Dignity of the Subject : For these Things never entred in the Heart of Man, nor can the Tongues of Angels fully describe them : When he shall shew unto the Saints the Path of Life, and admit them into his immediate Presence, where there is Fulness of Joy, and Pleasures for evermore, *Psalms* xvi. 11. for so an Entrance shall be administred to them abundantly into his Kingdom and Glory, *2 Pet.* i. 11, when all the Intellectual World shall applaud the Wisdom of their Choice and Conduct, and the Heavenly Angels congratulate them on their Admission into those blisful Regions, and become Partners with them in their Work and Joy : They shall see God as he is, and behold unutterable Things in his Presence suitable to the most exalted Capacity of their glorify'd Spirits, and be satisfy'd that this God in all his glorious Excellencies will be the Object of their Fruition to Eternity. *They shall be like him*, when the Primitive Rectitude of their Nature shall be repair'd in perfect Holiness, and this will be their Qualification and Security for perfect and endless Happiness. In his Light they shall see Light indeed, and he will make them drink of the Rivers of Pleasure : Whose Joys will be all Intellectual and Divine, when they shall be enflamed with the most perfect Love to God, and be filled with the everlasting Discoveries of his Love to them, so that they will know the Riches,
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the exceeding Riches of his Grace in all the Ages of Eternity, and what the more perfect Meaning of those Words is, *That God is Love*, 1 John iv. 8. Then they shall behold the Glories of the Redeemer, and more of the Mysterys of his Person, and the Dimensions of his Love, the Beautys of his mysterious Providence, and the Triumphs of his Conquest over all his Enemyes. And these Things will entertain us with Wonder and Satisfaction together, and by them our whole Natures will be possess'd with Extacies of Delight and Bliss for ever. — Thus shall it be done even to them that die in the Lord, whom the King of Heaven delights to Honour, as will appear especially at the Time of the Manifestation of the Sons of God, when Christ shall appear in all his Glories, and raise the Bodys of the Saints to Glory, and gather together in one both Angels and Men under himself their Head. — And this can't be far off; for he hath said, *Behold I come quickly, and my Reward is with me, to give every Man according as his Work shall be*, Rev. xxii. 12.

But I must proceed in the next Place,

III. To demonstrate the Blessedness of them that die in the Lord.

And this Consideration might in it self be sufficient, that the Wisdom of God has pronounced them Blessed. But it may be further cleared by considering the Excellency of this Rest, and the Greatness and Certainty of the Rewards proposed. And these are to be demonstrated by Reasons derived from the infinite Goodness and Faithfulness of God, the Perfection of the Redeemer, and the infallible.

infallible Connection that lies between Holiness in this World, and Happiness in the next, as the Harvest follows the Seed-time; *For what a Man sows that shall he reap*, Gal. vi. 7. But this may be better cleared by the following Particulars.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ hath conquer'd Satan, and taken away the Sting of Death, *Heb. ii. 14. 1 Cor. xv. 35.* no Dregs of the Serpent's Poyson are left in the Cup of Death since Christ hath tasted of it, and the Serpent's Head is bruised: This is to the Honour of the Redeemer, and the Safety and Comfort of Believers at the End of their Labours; for this Reason they are stiled more than Conquerors, and can triumph over Death by virtue of their Union with him.

2. The Lord Jesus has satisfy'd Divine Justice, and purchased this Blessedness for Believers: *for by once offering up of himself he has perfected for ever them that are sanctify'd*, Heb. x. 14. He bought our Souls, and bought the Kingdom for us; hence the Happiness of Heaven is called a purchased Possession, and none shall be able to prevent their actual Enjoyment of it.

3. He has ratified the Covenant of Grace which is made with Believers, and Sealed it with his Blood. This is an everlasting Covenant, and reaches beyond the Grave; which makes the believer secure in Life and Death. For, in that God has promised to be our God for ever, the Immortality of our Souls is presupposed, and the Resurrection of our Bodys included in the Promise, for, he is the God of our whole Nature, as appears by the reason of the thing, and the answer which our Saviour gave the Sadducees, *Mat. xxii. 23.* For then will he manifest himself to be ours indeed, our chiefest
 Good,

Good, and our exceeding great Reward, when both Soul and Body shall be admitted into his Glory.

What then should hinder the Blessedness of them that die in the Lord, seeing they have all things overcome and removed that might prevent it, and all things engaged for them that will secure it. Who shall lay any thing to their Charge, so as to seperate them from the Love of Christ? For their Life is hid with Christ in God, *When Christ who is their Life shall appear, they shall appear with him in Glory.* Col. iii. 3, 4.

The APPLICATION.

1. For Confutation.

(1.) Of them that Assert the Sleeping of the Soul after Death. Our Text doth not say their Works shall follow them hereafter at the Resurrection, but they do follow them when they die; this was confirmed in the Old Testament, by the translation of *Enoch* and *Elias*, and in the New Testament by the answer Christ gave to the repenting Thief; this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise: He that made them meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, will not suffer them to lie in Darkness and Oblivion for a long time, as these People fancy, and for this reason only, the Apostle desired to be unloosed from the Body, and from the present World, that he might be with Christ: To be absent from the Body, that he might be present with the Lord, which imports an immediate happiness.

(2.) The

(2) The *Antinomians* pretend 'tis unlawful to perform the Works of Religion with an eye to the Reward; but their Notions contradict the Scriptures which are designed to work on our Fears and Hopes, and the Examples of the Saints, such as *Moses*, who in all his Obedience had an eye to the Recompence of Reward, *Heb. xi. 26.* nay our Saviour himself did, *for the joy that was set before him, endure the Cross, and despise the Shame,* *Heb. xii.* In short these People not only oppose the Design of the Scripture, and the Moral Government of God in the World, but they undermine the very Frame of Human Nature. But I have not Time to enlarge.

II. For Information.

1. How great is the Goodness of God to Men, in affording such Relief under the Apprehensions of Death, which is in it self the greatest Evil that can befall our Nature, because 'tis the Wages of Sin which represents it as a most terrible Enemy, but Death is now swallow'd up in Victory: 'Tis the Glory of God to turn the Curse into a Blessing, and to make the Gates of Death become the Entrance into Paradise.

2. That the Christian Religion is most excellent which reveals and secures this Blessedness to us. When as the Heathens were exposed to dismal Anxiety at their Death, and had the most gloomy Prospects into the other Life, as one said in the View of Death, *Animula vagula, &c.* 'O my wandering Soul whither wilt thou go, into what Regions of Darkness and Horror? &c.' The Gospel has opened the Scenes of Eternity, and brought

brought Life and Immortality to light for all Believers, and declared the blessedness of them that die in the Lord, &c.

3. That the sincere Christian is most happy in every condition; for if such fall into temptation they shall rise again by Repentance, if they fall into trouble they shall be delivered from six and from seven troubles, if they fall into the Grave they shall rise again to Blessedness. By all which it appears how happy they are! How Wise and truly Great, that are prepared for such an Issue; for all things receive their denomination from their end, all is well that ends well. This the Psalmist puts a special remark upon. *Mark the perfect Man, and behold the upright: for the end of that Man is Peace,* xxxvii. 37. Such an one can handle the Serpent without terror, every event, tho' never so uncommon, shall promote the happiness of such, and all things that seem against them shall work together for their Good; and that for this certain Reason, because all things are theirs, Life is theirs, and Death is theirs. On all which accounts a Christian ought to be willing to die, nay to be in Love with Death, and there seems an Emphasis in these Words for that purpose *ἵνα ἀναπαύσωνται*, that they may rest, &c. representing it to be the choice and intention of a good Man to die, that he might obtain this Rest and Glory.

4. That it is therefore unreasonable to indulge immoderate Sorrow for the loss of such of our Friends as die in the Lord.—Many Deaths have lately visited this Congregation; may such melancholy Providences leave an Awful impression on them that survive; but the Relatives of such as are departed have not reason to be sorrowful as they

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that have no hope; tho' your worthy Pastor, and some of the Flock are removed together, we have ground to hope they are gone to Rest, and Rejoice together for ever.

III. *For Exhortation.*

To prepare for your selves the Comforts of such a Scripture against the Hour of Death, by securing your Union with Jesus Christ. And as—

Motives hereto consider,

i. That we must certainly die, whether we die in the Lord or not; prepared or unprepared. The experience of thousands of years may convince us of this truth: The Living know they must die, yet few of the Living lay it to Heart, and Number their Days so as to apply their hearts to Wisdom: Few apply to Christ the Eternal Wisdom—or to their present Duty as the Laws of Wisdom directs.—Let this be our endeavor by the force of such an important Motive.

2. Consider how excellent a Being the Son of God is, and how willing he is to admit into a Relation with himself; what Glory is there in his Person? What Miracles of Love hath he wrought for us, who has died to convince us of his tender compassion to us?—With amazing condescension and importunity doth he invite us to come to him for Life; long doth he wait for us, and all his Creatures wait with him, while he stands at the Door and knocks: Long doth his Spirit strive that he may draw our Hearts, and unite us to him. And shall we not by this be prevailed upon.

3. Consider that if you die not in union with Christ you are most miserable, for if they only are
Blessed

Blessed that die in the Lord, the rest must needs be accursed, and Death with all its Terrors will have the utmost power upon them, they that die not in the Lord will be sent into regions of darkness and horror, where the Light of God never shines, and his Face will be against them. *And they shall be tormented with Fire and Brimston, in the presence of the Holy Angels, and in the presence of the Lamb,* as in *Verse 10.* That Glorious Saviour, who did in this World compassionate their Case, and sought this Union with them; will, in their extremity, upbraid them for their Madnes and Unbelief, having *Sworn in his Wrath that they should not enter into his rest.*

—Let me therefore intreat you by the Glories of your Saviour, by his tender bowels of Compassion, and also by the danger of neglecting, that you will secure this Union with him. Let me beseech you by all the Mercies of God, and perswade you by his Terrors, that you will not delay.

Let not the amusements of this Vain World divert and ensnare you: Endulge not any Lust or Pleasure which cannot consist with this Union.

Depend not on Common Notions of Christ and Salvation by him, without a saving Union with him.—Trust not to a flash of Conviction, or the general impressions which the Word may make on your Judgment or Affections, without proceeding farther; for if you compass your selves with these Sparks, and walk in the Light of such a Fire, this you will have at God's Hands, you shall lie down in Sorrow. *Isa. l. 11.*

IV. *For Direction.*

But if you are sincerely desirous to secure this Union, that you may die in the Lord.

1. In the first place see that you obtain a lively Faith, even the Faith of God's Elect; *For without Faith 'tis impossible to please God*, or to become one with Christ. And let this be regarded as a most Sacred Truth, that sound Believers do not only entertain Christ's Doctrine, but also receive his Person, and consent to be saved by him in his own Way, 1 *John* 12. This is that precious Faith which true Christians have obtained, and 'tis not only a like precious to all, but also in all, and such shall at last obtain *the end of their Faith, the Salvation of their Souls.*

And as an evidence of the soundness of your Faith and the reality and firmness of your Union with him, see that you change Hearts with Christ, and make an humble and sincere surrender of your selves to him.

And see that you shine with his likeness, and that you are adorned with his Graces, for unto this Believers were predestinated as well as to his Glory, *Rom.* viii. 29. *Old things are past away, and all things are become New* unto them, and in them, 2 *Cor.* v. 17. and that Gospel which revealed Christ to them, will change them into the same Image, *From Glory to Glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord*, 2 *Cor.* iii. 18.

2. Secondly, Take care that you abound in good Works, that they may follow you in their Glorious and Endless Rewards; and they also will, in the mean time, be an evidence of the Soundness of your Faith, and the Certainty of your Union with Christ. For as we receive Christ, we must walk
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in him, 2 Col. vi. And this is a faithful saying, and which ought to be constantly affirmed, That they who Believe, be careful to maintain Good Works, Tit. iii. 8. It is also the Noblest improvement of our Talents, and even of our Troubles, for every Branch which abideth in Christ, and bringeth forth Fruit he purgeth, *that it may bring forth more Fruit*, John xv. 2. So that we shall be able to say with the Apostle, *For us to live is Christ, and to die is gain*, Phil. i. 21.

One great Motive unto this has been already observed, that of all things in this World, when we die *Our Works only follow*, Naked we came into the World, and Naked we must return. This made the *Turkish* Emperor Ordain, that a Winding-Sheet should be carried before him at his Funeral, with this Proclamation, ' Here comes *Soldine the Great*, who after all his Realms and Riches, after all his Triumphs and Glory, Nothing remains but a poor Winding Sheet. Yet a Christian has an invaluable Treasure to carry with him, even his *Good Works* which are accepted and rewarded through the Merits of Christ, for he that is Cloathed with his Righteousness shall not appear Naked in his presence, and he that is rich in *Grace and Good Works*, will be rich to all Eternity.

Let it then be your care to part with every Sin, that none of them may follow you hereafter, and to nourish the Graces that will Quickens you to every Duty, so that you may comfort one another with these Words, *Keeping your selves in the love of God, and looking for the Mercies of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ unto Eternal Life*. For if you thus take
care

care to Excel in every Grace, and to abound in all Good Works towards God as well as Man, *Serving him in Holyness and Righteousness all the Days of your Life*; you will then be able to look back on a dying Bed like good *Hezekiah* and say, *Remember Lord how I have walked before thee in Truth, and done that which is good in thy Sight*; and in a little time you will hear that blessed Eulogium, *Well done good and faithful Servant enter into the Joy of thy Lord*. When your Bodys are sinking into Dust, and all your Glory sinking with them, (*For the Glory of Man is but as the Flower of a Field, which soon fadeth away,*) you may then lift up your Heads with Joy that your Redemption draws nigh; for your Happiness is near, tho' it be in reversion, and your Crown is sure, tho' you must Labour, and Strive, and Die to obtain it. *Wherefore my Beloved Brethren, be ye Steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, for as much as you know your Labour is not in Vain in the Lord,* 1 Cor. xv. 58.



FINIS.

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